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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: JOSEPH WU'S APPOINTMENT AS NEW TECRO CHIEF

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies gave significant coverage March 20 to a local murder case in which the police admitted Monday that they had arrested the wrong man. News coverage also focused on the year-end legislative elections and the 2008 presidential elections. An op-ed piece in the pro-unification "United Daily News" commented on the appointment of incumbent Mainland Affairs Council Chairman Joseph Wu as the new TECRO chief. The article said Wu will soon realize that having to deal with the State Department every day around the clock is completely different from his previous tasks of making emergency visits to the United States to make clarifications of President Chen Shui-bian's surprise remarks or moves. End summary.

"Joseph Wu, Being Taiwan's Representative in the U.S. is Not Like Putting Out Fires"

Loh I-cheng, a retired diplomat, opined in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (3/20):

"... The Green camp viewed Washington's approval of Joseph Wu's new appointment as hard evidence showing that the U.S. government supports the DPP to draw a clear line between itself and mainland China. But such a view deserves further deliberation. One cannot deviate from reality when handling foreign relations. Chen Shui-bian is the only one who has supreme power in Taiwan. Judging from the United States' national interests, even though it has enjoyed a smooth channel for dealing with Taiwan over the past seven years via [former TECRO chief] Chen Chien-jen and David Lee, the situation was something akin to scratching an itchy foot with one's boot on - namely, still failing to get to the root of the matter. Since the DPP regards Wu as 'one of the insiders,' surely there is no reason for Washington to say No to Taiwan. But neither the White House nor the State Department can possibly change their policy toward A-Bian's calculated attempt to write a new constitution and use the approach of 'slicing the salami' to push the envelope of complete independence, which will certainly affect U.S. global relations. ... Representative Wu will assume his new duties early next month. He will soon realize that having to deal with the State Department every day around the clock is completely different from his several previous assignments in which he was told to fly to the United States, clarify A-Bian's surprise moves and put out fires in Washington."

YOUNG